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TAGS: MARR PGOV PHUM PK PREL

SUBJECT: KAYANI WITHDRAWS OFFICERS FROM CIVIL DEPARTMENTS

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Following through on his public pledges to reduce military involvement in civilian politics, Chief of Army Staff General Kayani decided February 7 to withdraw military personnel who are currently serving in civil departments and return them to military positions. On February 11, he ordered the immediate return of approximately 150 army officers working in various GOP offices. In a move to improve soldier morale, Kayani also approved a robust welfare package for soldiers and young officers. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) During a February 7 Corps Commander Conference, Kayani approved plans to remove military personnel from civil departments and return them to military posts. The Director-General Inter-Services Public Relations said that there are approximately 300 serving military personnel currently on rotation to civil departments. Kayani's decision, however, allows for a small contingent of "essentially required" officers in civil departments to remain on a case-by-case basis.

¶3. (SBU) On February 11, Kayani issued a follow-up order directing approximately 150 Army personnel in civilian positions back to the Army. Included were approximately 50 military personnel and six major generals working in the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). Military personnel were also recalled from the National Highway Authority (NHA), Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA), the Ministry of Interior, the National Crisis Management Cell, the National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB), the Government of Punjab and Sindh, along with various other civilian departments.

¶4. (SBU) Kayani also approved a 10 billion rupees (\$620 million) welfare package intended to improve Army personnel's quality of life. The package provides for better accommodations and education for children of soldiers and young officers. Kayani since his appointment as COAS last year has taken a more proactive interest in the lower ranks and spent considerable time touring the country visiting rank-and-file troops in the field. Kayani also declared that during the elections the Army would help maintain law and order if needed, but the Election Commission was responsible for ensuring free and fair elections.

¶5. (C) Comment: The most recent IRI poll shows the Army's popularity has been rebounding under Kayani's leadership, and Kayani's statements and the ensuing press coverage almost

certainly will continue the trend. As the last army pay raise benefited high-ranking officers, the new welfare package will increase morale among the junior commissioned officers (JCO) and the lower officer ranks who have suffered the most casualties in recent actions against militants. These operations, along with the young retirement age of JCOs, suggest that Kayani is looking to ensure the Army's ability to recruit new troops. Kayani's father was a junior commissioned office which helps explain his sympathy for the lower ranks.

PATTERSON